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Illustration by Mary Morris

The Butterfly And the Bee

By Dave Walker

The Butterfly and the Bee and the essay, The Infinite and the Finite, are both Dave's contributions to this Venture. His story Valley of Shadow appeared in the fall issue.

IT WAS one of those dreams where Bill was aware. Like Scrooge with the death-ghost alongside, and he watching himself go through the motions. In a way, Scrooge is an appropriate simile in spite of the dream. The death ghost? I guess it's always alongside, and maybe with Bill it could be more real than with most. But with him, now, it took the form of bats. That too seems appropriate. His dream had fluttered with them. It was their shadows that screeched—like the splattered specks under the eyelids when a flashbulb pops. They had faded away, though, and he and Mary were discovered sitting on one of those impossibly lovely knolls—with a tree. Daisies and jonquils everywhere, of course, and the bees. Perhaps the shadows had been bees . . . . Mary was bonneted and lithe, and—as one might expect—he was high-collared and stiff. The familiar tin-type. Dreams have a way of reproducing the stereotypes, particularly for minds that may not have got beyond them.

Then Bill noticed that surrounding him and Mary—shutting off the view—was an ordinary garden lattice. Except that Mary didn't seem to see it. Bill even noticed its shadows weaving across her face, but she seemed to look beyond it, and said something about:

"Absorb and reflect, Bill. Don't hold in. Be a butterfly with me."

And he had answered curtly: "You be the butterfly," and for some reason couldn't keep from adding, sliding it under,

"And the bat."

She had stung back like a hornet.

"Blind and sucking. Is that what you mean?" And then she had looked at him significantly before thrusting again:

"Aren't you confusing the bees with the bats?" And she drifted through the lattice as though it didn't exist.

The glass window had awakened him then, jamming against his forehead. He looked around rather dazedly and saw the boy still watching them from across the aisle. The boy had not taken his eyes off them since he and his mother had boarded the train. Bill was used to it. The youngster probably was puzzled by their quiet ways and—possibly—Mary. The boy had evidently decided their manner had something to do with the cases in the rack. He was asking his mother about them.

"Shoosh. Don't talk so loud," she hushed him, "It's like pointing. I imagine they're musical instruments." She saw Bill looking at her. He turned back to the window.

"The odd shaped one's an accordian," Mary informed them, shifting beside him as she turned. "My husband and I play together. Bill's hands are too large for a stringed instrument."

OUT of the corner of his eye he saw her pause a moment like a small bird, listening, her neck slightly bent. Then she rose quickly and brought the violin case to her lap.

"I'll play for you," she said. "I don't think the others will mind. They're happy today."

Bill noticed for the first time that this was so. The other passengers were reading or talking. There was no loud laughter or leaden quiet. It was a gentle Sunday morning. He looked out the window to let the weather confirm it. At the same time he lay his hand firmly over Mary's.

She obeyed.

"Perhaps I'd better not play after all," she said, nodding negation. "Bill's not feeling well this morning."

But the boy would not have it. He insisted until finally Bill pressed her hand again. "All right," Mary replied happily, and she took the golden-hued mahagony instrument from its case, gently adjusted its knobs and stroked its strings. He watched her as she played a folk tune, a lilting melody with a sad undertone. She was like her violin: small but alive when she performed, impressively mute and aloof when still. He watched the grey and black strands of her hair shift as she bent over the sounds she shaped with the fibered wand. She was fine-boned and her nose was slightly long and her eyes a little too far-set, but when she moved—even with only her hands—she seemed inwardly animated. He felt huge and clumsy beside her . . . and sullen.

The passengers applauded the first time, but as Mary continued they sank into their long-backed chairs and listened with closed eyes. Some continued to read but they all listened. When Mary's small hands put the instrument back into its case and lifted it to the rack again, they turned to her and nodded their thanks. She did not acknowledge their nods, but sat back, looking straight ahead, her hand on Bill's arm.

Illustration by Claire Larson

He placed his own over hers and then touched her hair with his lips. He felt guilty. He hadn't wanted her to play at first. He hated the shufflings as the other passengers turned to examine and applaud. He could still feel their eyes. 'Mary had no inhibitions about such things,' he thought. Besides, he had been listening to the bells. When they had passed through the last small town, the church bells had filtered through the heavy, glass window, disturbing his thoughts. It was late Spring and the bells took him back to his boyhood days in New England. He was walking from the white-spired church building with his thin-lipped mother and tightly-suited father. He remembered the lips because his mother had turned to him suddenly — just as the woman across the aisle had done her boy—and berated him for talking during the service.

"It's sacrilege," she had said, pursing her lips. "You're to mend, not wend."

THIS had been his mother's favorite expression. He didn't know where she had picked it up, but he understood its meaning. Talking in church was 'wending.' Practically everything had been 'wending.' He had finally agreed with her — been forced to. "It's your destiny, dear. Otherwise why would God have crippled you?"

He shifted in the seat, adjusting the brace on his leg. The warmth of Mary's hand eased him, and he knew she was aware of his fretfulness. They had become so conscious of each other's moods that there was no longer a cloak of privacy to hide behind. He didn't often want to; but this morning the rebellion was rising in him again. 'Had she played for that reason?' he wondered. He still never knew for sure whether it was for him or the others or the music that she played.

"We'll be there soon," she said. "It's bothering you again, isn't it?"

"Yes. It's this sitting," he lied, bending toward the leg, knowing she wouldn't accept it.

"It was the bells, wasn't it, Bill? And

(Continued on page 30)

Five Year Venture

By H. V. Larom

Mr. Larom is faculty advisor and originator of Venture.

Five years ago, Publications Board allocated around $400 to a group of students to publish a magazine which, we hoped, would stimulate writing on the campus. Because it was an experiment, we called it *Venture*. It seemed a daring one to Pub Board because it presupposed cooperation between students in English and Journalism. It seemed a dubious one to Central Board because it cost money, and, after watching the last convulsions of its predecessor, *The Mountaineer*, it seemed a rather desperate venture to the tiny staff headed by Helen Lenhart (Journalism '53).

Our prospectus was a simple one: First, we would print no smut, no vulgarity in the name of humor. Second, we would publish the finest material we could get, deal with adult themes of all kinds, and judge the material solely on the basis of sincerity of purpose and excellence of writing. Third we wanted an all-campus magazine that would draw from all parts of the University.

Now, on our fifth anniversary, a glance back through *Venture's* file copies can tell the reader a good deal about what the thoughtful MSU students think about. A staff of fifteen or so votes on every manuscript and almost invariably throws out the "corny" and the cheap. Of course a word or two not intended for grandma may have crept in here and there due to the innocence of the faculty advisor, but we have avoided successfully the weary vulgarity usually found in the college "comic" magazine.

On the other hand, *Venture* has dealt with mature themes and has served as an outlet for creative writers on the campus. Dr. Walter N. King ('46) who reviewed the fall issue wrote, "Students on this campus should be proud of the magazine and eager to present themselves in it. After seven years of discouraged dipping into the Yale literary magazine, I haven't the slightest doubt that student writing at MSU is not inferior to that published on other campuses. The still tentative productions of our fledging writers can stand up to far tougher criticism than I have offered here, and this cannot always be said for the languid imitations of Hemingway, Faulkner and Truman Capote, which have lately blossomed in the gray-flannel atmosphere of the Ivy League."

Thumbing through the back issues will prove that over the years students from ten or more departments and schools have contributed to both staff and contents. Forester Richard Behan's essay on smoke jumping, published in *Venture* last year, won a prize, publication in *The American Forester* and several job offers from Pacific Coast foresters; Captain Lewellyn's own story of his life in a Korean prison camp was a *Venture* exclusive and will soon be reprinted in an anthology. Barbara Knight's stories, all printed first in *Venture*, have won two Stearns short story awards, and other manuscripts are going the rounds.

The experiment of five years ago is now printed on the campus as a "lab" course, giving academic credit to the editor and business manager. Students from various departments who would never have had the chance of working in a top-flight print shop amid the rumble of presses and the smell of printer's ink, now learn something of copy reading and make-up—and endure the struggle, so familiar to publishers everywhere, of "putting the magazine to bed."

Examination of back issues will show, too, some of the things that concern the student deeply. Among the older writers you still find the frank probing of life in the service, and even, from time to time, echoes from the blood-stained Korean hills. From younger writers there is much questioning of childhood and examining of parents. Strangely, there is little of the old slapstick humor, little sign of the panty-raid psychology discussed in the daily press.

But if *Venture* is prone to be serious, it is because the student is serious; if it is changing from year to year, it is because the student attitude is changing. The MSU student mind, as shown in *Venture* at least, is a frank, questioning and vigorous one, and, most important, after five years it is still venturous.

the leopard hunter

By Barbara Knight

Barbara, winner of two Stearns' short story awards, is represented in this issue of Venture by two poems The Leopard Hunter and The Fisher on page 15.

These barren hills
cast listless shadows
crouching over
the white-lipped valley,
and the sky,
simulated in soft
pearl grey
rumbles
with the day-dying
sun.
The red, blunt
fingers lifting
stars from some
enormous placenta
of cloud whipped
overhead
The ganglion of
tendril nurtured
weather,
imminent in snow.

And now, in
black, and
loping low
across the
patched and
spotted slopes,
low-bellied,
slung with
wrapt muscle
the cat comes
running with
the bulk of hunger
sodden, in its
eyes, close-knitted
with the wind
and gagging at
the snow clogged
stream from
the highest
place.

Ten lappy pines
surround the
hunter, tethered
hurdled in the
break of trees
He clings to
one and wholly
shifts the
burden of a
gun
that weights
him, micronight
to there.

The embers,
coals and unburnt
sticks
are drifting
now, with
fine ghost
powder coming
and with
that glow, the
day and night
are crossed and
go to fill the
last great sky.

The cough and
hump of flesh
smell fresh
upon the wind
and soft-blood
tastes stir,
tickling in the
throat. The
mood of rare-
touched empathy
is signified
and shown.
The single drop
of sweat embolling
down the hunter's
back, between
the wool
and bone
is polled
in leopard's
ducts, secreting
oils and
humors
for his
night bred
fast.

NEW SHOES

By Milton Sherman

This story by Milton Sherman is his first contribution to Venture. He is a senior in English and is from Manhattan.

TOMMY McAllister climbed into the pig pen and kicked the first pig that got in his way. He had waited a long time for a new pair of shoes and he decided to vent his wrath upon the pigs. The Old Sow didn't budge an inch when he kicked her so he repeated the process. He kicked harder and the pig squealled a low protest but didn't move. Raising her ugly head she challenged him. Saliva dripped from her half-open mouth and she stood broad-side between Tommy and the trough while the other pigs squealled and crowded around him trying to get at the slop pail he held in his hand. He was furious; he not only couldn't have new shoes but he was supposed to walk around pigs. He kicked the sow twice, violently, but she only squealled louder and turned slightly toward him. Tommy, hating her obstinacy, grabbed a stick that was lying by his foot and clobbered her on the snoot. Grunting horribly, the Old Sow jumped at him. She held her head high in the air and a heavy rim of white foam forming around her lower jaw overflowed and dripped to the ground. Tommy dropped the slop bucket and retreated out of the pen. The other pigs rushed the bucket, tipped it over, and ate the potato peelings, cooked barley and carrot tops from the ground. They pushed and shoved and didn't seem to care that it wasn't in the trough while the Old Sow

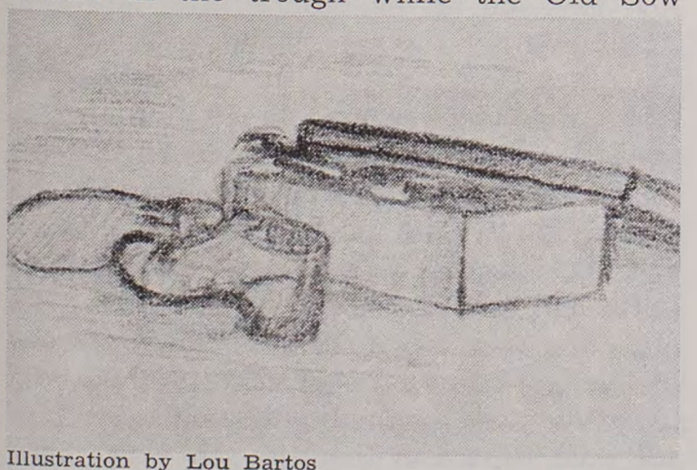

Illustration by Lou Bartos

stood apart, resenting the treatment she had received. Tommy waited until she moved away then he crept in and got the bucket. He kicked the corner of the pen as he walked past it, but he forgot to use the side of his foot.

"OUCH! damit." He danced around on one leg for a few seconds, until the pain lessened, and sat down to examine the damage. The shoes were old and badly worn leaving the big toe exposed. The skin was scratched and he had cracked the nail. It hurt like the devil. "Damit, damit, damit," he muttered, as he got up, slung the slop pail as hard as he could, and hobbled toward the house.

He thought about his sister, Geraldine, as he moped along and it irritated him that she would probably get a new pair of shoes this year and a new dress too. She always got new things. He was tired of wearing the shoes that his brothers had already worn out. Even if the leather wasn't cracked, they were still "hand-me-downs." He hated the word. Of course, the pair he had gotten from the rummage sale were good ones, and the best that he had had, but they were not new. It was pure heaven when he had tried on Geraldine's new brown and white ones. He had laced them tightly and walked as fast as he could before she caught him and made him take them off. He had tripped over things looking down at them and their compact firmness made him feel as if he could do many things that he had not thought of doing before. He wanted a new pair of shoes more than anything in the world.

AS TOMMY entered the house, he was limping more noticeably than his wound justified. He got a chair and, moving some empty jars and an old crock, set it before the cupboard where the iodine and bandages were kept. Geraldine was seated on a stool in the kitchen peeling potatoes for supper. She eyed Tommy from head to foot as he passed and tried to detect the source of his limp. He was aware of her scrutiny and it bothered him. He looked perfectly normal to her; short, stocky, needed a hair cut and the freckles were all on his nose where they belonged; his bib overalls were too big and

the right shoulder strap hung down on his arm, as usual. The dirty polo shirt made him complete. Certain that the limp was a fake, she voiced comment.

"Whatdidja do, hop-along, break a leg?" Tommy got the box of bandages out of the cupboard and sat down on the chair to dress his toe.

"Oh, shut up. Who asked you?" he blurted, as the iodine entered the scratch.

"Don't tell me to shut up! I'll tell mama on you! What happened to your foot?"

Tommy was aware of her authoritative tone. She always used it on him when the others were away. In three more years he'd be in High School, then he would have something to say and she wouldn't be able to lord it over him.

"I kicked the side of the pig pen. Whadda you care?" He wrapped a hunk of gauze around his toe and put his shoe back on.

"What did you do that for, stupid?" she asked, absent-mindedly.

"How do I know? I just kicked it, that's all. When do you think they'll be home from town?" His toe felt better and he wanted to change the subject.

"Pretty soon, and I bet you don't know what I'm going to get for school this year?"

"Yeah, what?" Tommy said, without interest. He started toward the door, not caring about her new things.

"Besides new shoes, of course, I'm going to get a good dress. Mother said it will be a red one." Geraldine spoke nonchalantly and her tone indicated that she felt the things she was going to get were no more than a girl starting high school ought to have.

Tommy bolted out of the house without comment. There was no justice; Geraldine would get to ride on the yellow bus to town while he plodded over the fields, alone, to the old country school. Unless they closed it! There had been some talk about it—but even if they didn't close it, wouldn't he need new shoes worse than she needed another good dress? That she was a girl and older than he, was no reason. He stopped at the woodpile and slowly picked up the axe. Suddenly a new thought occurred to him. Maybe he *would* get a new pair of shoes this year. He stood perfectly still and, pondering the thought, looked down at his old shoes and imagined that they were new. A rooster crowing just behind him distracted him from his reverie and he decided to hurry and do the chores well so that he would deserve the shoes, if his mother brought them. He split a cedar limb and commenced vigorously to chop it into stove links. He chopped much more wood than the woodbox would hold and gathered a large armload to take to the house.

HIS toe hurt a little but he didn't feel like limping. "I hope the shoes are brown ones," he muttered as he went through the yard gate. He had so much wood in his arms that he dropped a couple of sticks and, placing it in the box by the stove, he reflected that he could bring in another armload if he stacked it carefully. As he started to leave, he saw Geraldine seated before her mirror putting on lipstick. She was dressed in a slip and her hair was done up in a knot.

"You look ikky," he jeered.

"Don't stand and gawk. How do you know how a woman is supposed to look?" Geraldine made a pass at her knot of hair and slammed the door, her special way of settling things.

The sole of his shoe flapped as he sprang over the yard gate and ran back to the woodpile. He thought how much faster he could run with new shoes and even imagined that he could outrun Geraldine. Returning with the wood, he glanced down the lane to the road but there was no car. He stacked the wood neatly and remembered that he must bring in the slop pail. On his way to the pig pen, he decided to jump the corral fence but he made his decision a little late and, tripping on the top pole, landed in a heap on the other side. He got up sheepishly and took a quick look around to see if any of the animals were watching. Convinced that his shortcoming had passed unobserved, he picked up the old bucket from its resting place under some dry, spidery tumbleweeds in the corner of the fence. After rubbing the dirt off and carefully straightening the handle by pressing it against a corral pole, he took the bucket to the house and placed it by the wash tub under the rusty, tin sink. Geraldine's door was open and she was still primping. Tommy felt that he had to have another crack at her.

"You better get that stuff off before mama comes home or you'll really get it!" he shouted, bravely.

"That's all you know about it. She doesn't care. I'm going to start wearing lipstick to school pretty soon, anyway." Tommy knew she was bragging but he had other things on his mind.

"How much faster do you think I can run with new shoes?" he blurted.

"What!" she shouted, surprised.

"How much faster can I run with new shoes on?" he repeated, impatiently.

"Don't ask stupid questions! Who said anything about you getting new shoes?" Geraldine spoke with considerable effort. He was boring her and taking a lot of her time.

"I'm gonna getum, all right . . . . they're goina-be-brown-ones," he said automatically. "But how much faster can I run! I bet I can even jump the corral fence with new shoes." He was not to be denied and he would like to have challenged her to a race, pending the shoes, of course, but he didn't want to get that familiar with her.

"Shoes don't make you run faster, you dope. You need longer legs. Why don't you get lost?"

IT DIDN'T make any difference to Tommy what she said. He was convinced that he would be able to run faster, but he wanted her to confirm it. She was a dud.

"You gotta gather the eggs, don't forget," he reminded, cheerfully.

"Oh, Tommy, will you get them for me, pleaseeee. I'm not dressed or anything," she purred. She never turned away from the mirror or stopped putting on lipstick.

"Okay," Tommy agreed, as he crept over by the window and shouted, "HERE THEY COME!"

Geraldine tipped over her stool getting up and she had most of her lipstick rubbed off when she got to the window to make sure. The lane was deserted. She was furious.

"Look what you made me do, you little brat. I'll get you!" She charged out of the bedroom with a hairbrush in her hand. She was a lefty and couldn't hit anything if she threw the brush. All Tommy had to do was beat her to the yard gate to assure his safety, as she wouldn't chase him around the barnyard in her slip; it would be beneath her dignity. He had a good start and he was through the gate before she got to the kitchen door. Geraldine, stopping at the gate, let fly with the brush. It hit the gatepost and ricocheted back into the yard, making her duck. Tommy laughed at her predicament, but he didn't laugh loud or long; he knew that if she came through the gate he was a gonner, slip or no slip.

"You just wait! I'll get you! Just try to come into the house!" she challenged, as she whirled around, picked up her brush, and disappeared through the door.

"Hey, your lipstick's smeared!" he shouted after her, as he unconsciously put a couple more paces between him and the house.

Tommy took a handleless lard pail and entered the hen house. Most of the hens laid their eggs on a shelf where straw was provided for them. There were no divisions for nests and an old, brown setting hen gathered most of the eggs under her. Tommy eased her aside gently with the pail so she couldn't peck him and took the eggs. The hen clucked a few times and settled down into her original position in the straw. She seemed to be more concerned with setting than with hatching eggs. Tommy was entering the yard with the eggs when he noticed their '35 Plymouth coupe approaching the house. He set the eggs by the gatepost and streaked for the barn. He reasoned that he could take them in later and that it would prevent him entering the house empty handed.

TOMMY felt that it would be better to be out of sight when they arrived. Hearing the car pull up at the house he entered the barn, he took the manure fork and cleaned out around Star, the family plug who was used to bring the cows down out of the hills for milking each day. He glanced toward the

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Larry Stillsmoking

By Ronnie Roper

This is Ronnie's first contribution to Venture. She is a senior in English and from Cut Bank.

LARRY Stillsmoking pulled himself up out of the rags and tatters of old blankets that were his bed. He did not notice the smell of the unwashed bodies, the cold of the morning, the darkness of the windowless room because they were always there. He dressed in the dark, fumbling with the buttons on the stiff, torn shirt, fingers working where the buttons were missing. He couldn't find his shoes, so he searched on hands and knees, shuffling quietly among the blanketed forms sleeping, as he had been, on the hut floor. He could go without the shoes as he had before, but today he especially wanted them. In his search, he accidentally hit the wall with his shoulder, shaking the whole structure of the packing box house. Quietly, he listened to the groan of one of the sleeping figures, but the sound ceased, the rattle of the house died away, and he was again in the silence. In a corner, mixed with other scraps and rags, he found his shoes at last, and sitting on his blanket, he pulled them on. The laces were stiff and knotted; it took a long time for him to get them straight before he pushed the blanket door aside and went into the cold morning air.

Hunger lay heavily in his stomach but he had learned long ago to ignore it, kneeling on the moss-grown rocks to drink. These things he did automatically, his mind not going farther than the problem of tying a shoelace or scooping up a handful of creek water—for Larry Stilsmoking didn't want to think of anything just yet. The whole day for decisions, problems, and thinking lay ahead.

He turned from the creek, walking slowly through the morning-damp weeds where the thick red brush grew. He liked those trees and the low prairie hills that stood behind, folded smoothed and bare. The morning song of the meadowlark reached him; he had waited and listened for it and was glad that it had come, but he felt that it was time to go. Today especially he did not want to be late. He left the creek bottom, walked through the yard, past the weathered rust-red and grey of springs, tin cans, metallic rubble. He was aware now (since he had started school he had become aware of many things) that this was the city dump yard. He could not remember, though he tried as he walked in the aisles amid the trash, what he had thought before, except that it was home and that he liked it. He had thought that everyone was cold and hungry when they awoke, that food was scarce for everyone, that everyone got clothes by searching in the new trash. He shut his mind to keep out the trouble.

HE CAME again to the hut, though he had been avoiding the meeting in his mind. The prairie quiet fell away and all that remained was the square charred shape of the packing box house with its blanketed door and the stove pipe jutting out of the side. The family was up now; he could hear the slow stirrings within the house, but he did not want to go in. He wanted, for a moment longer, to be alone. As he waited, his mother came first from the hut, heavy and blanketed, dressed in rags. Larry stood back and watched as she began her day's work, the search through the trash for the family needs. He used to help her and he still wanted to help, but he did not have time. His brothers and sisters came from the hut and clustered around the blanketed form of their mother. They were not so well dressed as Larry and they had no shoes. Unwashed, uncombed and ribby, they pawed through the old pipes, the tires, and inner tubes, becoming excited when they found a wrinkled, dirty comic book.

Larry turned to leave. The children waved to him and he waved back. As he started down the littered road to the highway, he

looked back to see the other families emerging from the hovels, the women turning their similar, blanketed forms to the search among the rubbish. His father was up now, tending a slowly burning junk heap. He poked at it, then leaned on his rake, tall hat leaning, black braids hanging in front of his ears, grey-black clothes draped over his bones. Larry felt the awe rise up as always; unconsciously he felt behind his own ears where his dignified braids had been.

His first determination was gone and he lagged, turning away from home, moving slowly towards the highway and the morning ahead. Home was gone as surely as if it were out of sight. The little thoughts moved in and he examined them, skirting carefully the big, important thing, and the tiny morning doubts were gone when he at last came delightfully up against it—today was his last day of school.

AT THE highway, Larry sat down in the tall fan grass in the barrow pit. The bus was not in sight, and he realized that he

was too early. His feet became cold even in the shoes for he had no socks underneath, and the night cold was still in the ground. Next his arms and hands felt the cold, then his ears. At last he decided to walk to town since it was not far and he knew the way. He liked the long yellow bus, but he could ride in it on the way back.

He walked on the roadside, whistling, thinking he would tell Miss Day. For the others in his class, the white kids, it seemed that school was right and that they needed it. For himself, though, he felt that school was not good. He thought this in the heavy Indian tongue, but he knew as he walked that he would never be able to say it in the language of Miss Day.

He didn't know what he could say to her, so he tried not to think of it, tried to look at the houses he was passing now. He wondered idly as he walked how the white people expected their friends to come in when they had big fences all around. When he rode on the bus, he did not often notice these houses, but when he did, he was always surprised to see that they looked like the pictures in the magazines he had found in the dump.

When he got to school, the building was still locked; the window panes looked cold and flat and grey in the early day. There was nothing else to do, so he walked out to the playground and sat in one of the swings. For the first time he was able to use playground equipment without being crowded by the next person. He could remember his first words in the white language, learned several weeks before on this playground. The children had been standing in line for the slide, Larry following because he had never seen a slide before. There was a taller boy in front of him, blond with blank grey eyes, an older boy not in Larry's room. Larry remembered how the line behind him had shifted, jostling him into the boy. The impact of grey eyes had hit him, the "Goddamnyou!" he had not understood.

He did not remember it often because it was painful, but he could remember now how he had memorized those words and cataloged them for use in anger. The time had come at home when one of the children had yanked a comic book from his hands. The "Goddamnyou" had burst from Larry and he had looked up to see his father standing before him. His father said in the guttural tongue of the Indian, "Don't use the white man's language here."

FROM that day in the first week, Larry Stillsmoking was against school. He had wondered then what would happen if he didn't go, for his mother had said that it was a white man's law. She wanted him to go, he knew. So Larry had stayed in school and weeks had passed, but now he had decided. From now on he would stay at home.

He was still playing on the swings when he heard the thin jangle of the bell. He ran across the playground, slipping in the gravel, reaching the front of the building after the others were inside. He remembered the little scowl Miss Day got on her face when he was late, but it seemed that no matter how he tried, he was sometimes tardy.

Miss Day said, "Good morning, Larry," as he burst into the room. There was hardly any scowl and Larry thought that she sounded as though she weren't mad. He walked slowly down the aisle, meeting the cold glances of his classmates.

"Stand and we'll say our pledge." Larry stood but he didn't know the words. The voices began: "I pledge allegiance to the flag . . ." (How could he tell Miss Day that he would not be back? His mind formed the words he knew—Miss Day, I'm not coming any more—But what if she asked why? What could he say? Even if he had the words, how could he say "You're nice, Miss Day, but you could never see why I must stay home.") . . . with liberty and justice for all." The class sat down, but Larry was, as usual, dreaming. He felt the elation take hold of him, nearly pick him up off the floor and spin him—today was the last day of all this.

Larry sat at his desk, feeling the autumn sun from the immense picture windows warm his back, turning the desk top into a scorching surface under his hands. The whole room was comfort and Larry reveled in it. By turning just slightly he could see out the big windows into what looked like a whole forest of golden trees with the leaves falling. He could imagine that outside was nothing but trees—no buildings, no people —just trees, all bronzed and red.

IT WAS with an effort that he turned from his dreaming to the words on the board. Miss Day, tall and light-haired, was still writing, saying the words slowly and clearly as she put them down in bold print. Larry realized they were words which he was supposed to know, felt the little fear that she would call on him and the others would laugh because he could not read. When she finished her writing, she turned to the class. Larry was aware of the shining light quality of her, the neatness of her pale blue, softly-woven dress.

"Larry, will you read first?" He had expected it. The first grade reader was out and opened to the page, thumbed and finger smudged. Haltingly he said, "See David. See David run."

"That was very good. Next, Mary Ann." The breath inside him was expelled; the little fear fell away. He knew and Miss Day knew that this was only a game, that he could say the words on this page from memory. The others didn't know, Larry thought. Once in a while the buck-toothed boy in front of him turned when he recited and the suspicion was in his pale face, but the recitation always went well.

A well-scrubbed girl was reading now, slowly, word by word, but with understanding. A smile was on Miss Day's face. This was what Miss Day was trying to help him to do—to read with understanding. Sometimes she kept him in at recess and after lunch to help him learn the words and what they meant. Those were good times. He would sit in one of the low blond desks in the warm room and Miss Day would sit beside him. Always a sweet smell was there, the smell of soap and cleanliness. Her smile was for him and he could sense a feeling of happiness in her.

Now the smile and pleasure were for all the class, for Larry sitting in the back row, for the girl with long curls across the aisle, for the blond, red-cheeked boy sitting in the front seat. Bathed in the calmness of the room and the autumn warmth, Larry nodded. A bug flew in to light on his shoulder. He ground it into a black mash on the page, still wondering how he could tell Miss Day that he wasn't coming to school any more, still thinking of the good days ahead at his own home. He was considering this, happily, when the desire to sleep crowded over him with the heat and serenity of the room. He laid his head on the desk, cradled in one arm, and dozed.

His rest was short. Miss Day called time for recess nearly as soon as he slept. The stamp of feet around him jolted him into wakefulness. This was the time he dreaded —recess. During school he did not have to talk to his classmates, but now there was no choice. He felt himself picked up in the tide that swept toward the playground. He was buffeted and pushed; one boy, as he went by, nudged him in the ribs. Before he could seem to walk with them he was on the playground where the beginnings of winter nip were in the air, and Larry saw that the others had sweaters and jackets to keep out the chill.

The games were already started—the line for the slide was long and shifting. Already fights were breaking out in it. Larry watched fascinated as one boy tried to stick his bubble-gum in the hair of the girl in front of him. He stood stiff on the playground edge, the fear again creeping up. It was the same fear that always came when he tried to be with them, and he remembered when once he had studied until the class moved indoors, shuffling through the corridors. Larry had stood by the classrom door, looking down the long shiny halls. He had met the stares of the children, turning aside under their glances. One of the girls had moved up to him (He could remember still the plaid she was dressed in, the patent leather shoes, the red bows in her short hair), stood in front of him pursing her lips and finally said, "Larry's so dumb he has to have special school at recess." The taunt made, she

flipped off and he had not been able to face her squarely since. The words had not all been clear, but the tone was there and the meaning. It was the same with the next boy who walked by, sing-songing under his breath, "Doctor, lawyer, *Indian chief*"—the emphasis on the last.

THESE other recesses were bad, but yesterday had been the worst. For several days he had played pump-pump-pull-away. It made sense to him and he liked it. He had stood with the others, a little apart and ragged, not quite part of the group but not quite alone. The ritual began:

"Pump, pump, pull away, !
Come away or I'll pull you away.
One, two, three . . ."

Larry ran, felt the hard body hit his, knock him sprawling in the dirt. He was up immediately, brushing off the gravel that had ground into his hands, unprepared for the second jolt from the boy who had tagged him. When it came, he was aware of the hostile face, the aggressive swinging fists. Then he was fighting, hard-fisted, with animal ferocity. He hardly felt the sore mouth and hurting ribs. The pair were on their feet, then in the dirt again. As he fought, Larry was aware of the clamor of voices around him, of the enclosed ring of bodies. He pulled away from the fists, backed steadily off with the older boy after him. He was not sure when Miss Day arrived, but suddenly he and the other boy were separated and their teacher was between them.

"That's enough," she said, and her voice was firmer than he had ever heard it. "There's no sense in fighting on the playground. Neither of you will have recess for awhile if you can't play with the others." As he turned, Larry noticed her look that was especially for him. It said, "I've done all I can to help you, but you have failed me." In that moment he knew that he would always fail her, that school was not right for him.

Now the fear was back, the fear that this would be like other recesses. He saw a girl coming towards him, the girl who sat across the aisle, all pastel pink and gold. He tried to turn away, tried to avoid her (for he hated to even speak) but there was no way out.

"I saw you fighting yesterday," she said. He didn't answer so she ventured again. "Cold, isn't it?"

"Yeah," he said.

"Even in the sunshine it isn't warm. Are you cold?" She huddled into her pink wooley coat.

"No."

"Look," she said, "I've got a scarf that I don't need." She extended it. It, too, was pink and wooley. "Why don't you wear it—my mom won't care."

Larry looked at it, fighting the desire to turn and run. He edged away, but Miss Day was suddenly there, her presence bringing both pleasure and a small despair. "I think that's very nice of Lynn, don't you, Larry? You'd better say thank you." She turned away to the playground groups, leaving Larry to face the girl.

The small despair grew to a big despair, the feelings inside him twisted and turned. He had been offered something to wear by one of them, as if he could be warm on the cold winter days with her scarf on his neck, as if he could ever be happy at all in school.

The scarf was still being offered, but he turned away, breaking into a run, away from the playground, damning them all.

He ran down the street, the ears closed, forgetting that he had wanted to ride the big bus home, forgetting that he wanted to tell Miss Day that he was quitting. For blocks he ran, houses flashing past, his breath coming in shorter and shorter gasps, his eyes burning with the wind.

AT LAST his breath ran out and his legs became leaden and weak. He slowed. The houses and streets were a hazy blur in his sight. Damn them all, Miss Day, too. He had thought she understood, but she, too, felt him an object of pity. He hated her—no, not really hated—for she was kind, he could tell it, and had tried so hard to help him learn to read. He had wanted to say goodbye to her and to them, to hear their goodbys and see maybe a little sadness on their faces as he left. Yet he knew deep down that this was a dream, that only the cold stares would have followed him.

He was walking slowly now with the thoughts of school washing over him. The elation of quitting had drained away; instead, the unhappiness was working in again.

He would miss the comfort of the schoolroom when he was in the wind-whipped cold of the tar papered shack; he would miss the polished floors, the blond shiny tables, the clean white lavatories—but he had never known them before and so could learn to live without them again. He had liked the warm lunches—good food such as he had never known before. He wished he could have told Miss Day goodby.

He was out on the highway now, kicking tin cans lost from the dump trucks. If only he could have said goodby. Now that he was gone, he thought that sometimes even the kids had been not so bad when they had tried to talk to him. But he would soon be home; he could see it ahead now. He turned into the dirt road, noting immediately the litter on it. A blackbird on a fencepost flew up at his approach. The cold reached into him, chilling him. Automatically, Larry stooped to pick up a shirt that had been lost from a dump load. This would be good for someone in the family. All of a sudden he felt a queasiness in his stomach and didn't know where it came from.

As if in a trance he walked into the yard, feeling his stomach turn over a little at the sight of the tall, bulky box houses and the charred rubbish. The family was still searching, but the younger ones dropped their work to run and greet him, the baby crawling after the others in excitement, creeping over the tin cans and paper scraps. Larry walked by them and they wondered why he did not speak.

His father was standing by. Larry looked to his face to see what he could read, but there was nothing except, Larry thought, a sadness that mirrored the feeling within Larry himself. He looked to his mother where she was working with the other women. He saw the gladness that he had known would be there, but it was dulled too, it seemed, with unhappiness. She said hello but did not comment on his return so early in the day. It was as if both his father and mother had known that he would not keep on at school.

the fisher

By Barbara Knight

Kiss me once
the dolphins called
the wind of lovely stuff
revealed
a screen illumined by
the sea
A creel of wobbly fish
and rubbered silver skin
and bone
destroyed by fishings
willful reel

I knelt and pulled
the blue fish in
and tipped the spikes
and pins
from wet, red mouths
The fingers pushed
the scales scarred
and ripped
to point of gill.

And through the probing
fingertips
the salt of persperd blood
would fill the hollow
of my hand

I dipped the ruddy
fish
in waters blue
and lisped by sun

Clean they rose, with
sparkling eyes
yellow, white and
cumbered now
the water drops
were flickering,
fell
as summit
by my palm

The ruddled water
lapped with care
and shook
the piles and pillers
there.

The Interview

By Dick Brooking

This is Dick's first contribution to Venture. He is from Livingston, and is a senior in English.

Illustration by Bede Barry

THE Dictator entered, purposefully, as a successful Dictator should. He stood in the pleasant room, drawn up to his full height, too consciously aware that his familiar protectors were no longer at his back. The nagging sense of his exposure was disquieting. True, it was a necessary part of the agreement, but how long was it since he'd been alone? Ten years? Twenty?

The well-groomed young man appeared from the side door.

"He will see you now," he said.

The tightly belted brown uniform was tailored loosely under the Dictator's shoulders. He felt the drop of moisture form in his armpit, and then breaking loose, race down his side in an icy path. The small droplets of perspiration formed on his brow just under his hairline and threatened also to begin their downward journey. He brushed them away with his fleshy hand. The room was hot.

The Dictator looked again at the young man's bland smile and then walked across the room with his habitual authoritative pigeon-toed stride.

He followed the young man into the conference room. Here the Dictator sensed that all was designed to promote the most utter mental comfort and security. The clean white walls were broken only by a few tasteful pictures that he did not recognize but was sure were very expensive. The light was subdued, almost a bathing of light instead of a direct glare. The Dictator let a small frown form. It was not what he had expected. He would have preferred more Spartan appointments. Here nothing was sure. The beginnings of a frown deepened as he surveyed his interviewer. The man looked, of course, human, perhaps a bit too perfectly so.

The Interviewer's carefully brushed hair cast small highlights about the room. The Dictator again drew himself up so that he was taller than the man; it afforded a small measure of relief.

The young man made quite proper introductions and slipped softly from the room.

"Won't you sit down?" the Interviewer asked courteously.

The Dictator waited until the man had seated himself and then sank stiffly in the all-too-soft chair.

"Cigar?" asked the Interviewer.

The Dictator accepted and bit off the end. He spat the clipping on the floor in a habitual gesture.

Neither man seemed inclined to speak. The Interviewer was very relaxed behind the inlaid desk, and the Dictator tried to squirm to a more imposing position in the clutching chair. The Dictator drew in the cigar smoke in quick, decisive puffs and let it trickle out through his heavy nostrils.

Several minutes went by; still neither spoke. Finally from a need for reality, the Dictator said, "Very nice place you have here, very comfortable." He waved his cigar to establish his point, dropping a few ashes as he did so.

Again—silence, punctuated only by a few angry puffs of cigar smoke.

"You know, of course, why I bothered to come here," the Dictator stated.

"Yes," said the Interviewer, "we make it a practice of knowing".

"Your intelligence system must be nearly as good as mine then," said the Dictator, with a note of indecision in his voice.

"We do our best".

Again the silence closed down. The Interviewer retained his pleasant smile and was truly relaxed. The Dictator sat and let his resentment become more apparent. Under the uniform, the drops of sweat were now running down his sides in a constant stream; one followed another like a fiery knife cutting through the flesh to uncover the bone. He minutely shifted his position, but there seemed to be no one posture that would ease his body. Suddenly he burst out "Say something . . . !" and then stopped immediately as if ashamed.

"What would you like me to say, General? After all, it was you who requested this little conference."

"Yes—yes, you are quite right. I forgot myself for a moment." said the Dictator.

The Interviewer smiled the same smile once more and said gently, "Well, perhaps I can help you out to some extent. To get to the heart of the matter, you want Dr. Sidlich . . . . ah, removed. Isn't that right?"

"Yes . . . I . . ."

Here he was interrupted by a faint booming sound that seemed to come from overhead. It was utterly alien and out of place in this

room dedicated to peaceful conversation. The Dictator looked up startled.

The Interviewer caught the sound also and leaned back and applied the smile. "Very lovely, aren't they?"

"What is it?" asked the Dictator.

"Bells, General, the bells of St. Peters"

"Oh—yes, of course."

"It *is* rather curious, isn't it General, that the sounds should carry down all this distance. The Cathedral is quite some distance above us you know, a very great distance. Our novices often time their activities by the sounds. It seems as if the peal of the bells comes searching for us, but they are so weak when they come, so very weary."

"Yes—of course", replied the Dictator.

"By the way, General, did you know that we have accounted for more than half of the supposed descendents of St. Peter himself? It is really quite ironic if one stops to think of it. But then we make a double profit in such a case."

"You—you have been in business for quite a long time then?" asked the Dictator.

"Oh my yes, much longer than someone like you could even imagine. Today things are much the same as they have always been, although the speed of the modern world is rather frightening in a way. Why sometimes we have to wait weeks before we can even catch up with our . . . ah, objective."

The Dictator seemed to lose a bit of his stature in the chair at this. "Weeks—weeks, only," he murmured.

"I remember back in the old days," continued the Interviewer, "a contract could be completed one night and the bargain carried out by the next. Perhaps you remember a young Macedonian general who set out to subdue the entire world. The entire world, just think of it General, that lad had vision. He really might have done it too, but for the jealousy of one of his chief officers. You might take that as a universal warning, General."

"The same thing happened to another man from the same area, later, . . . Ah yes, it was my first fully independent case. You *do* remember Julius, don't you? I thought I arranged it very nicely, don't you agree?"

The bells continued to smother the room in their faint vibrations.

"So many in their prime of life—so many," said the Dictator to himself. Suddenly a vagrant thought broke loose from his restraining consciousness. He turned hesitantly and asked, "And—and He of Galilee? Also, —did you—?"

The Interviewer laughed. "You have touched upon one of our little sore spots General. We failed most miserably there. We were just a bit too late. But console yourself. Think what would have happened if we had not done it at all! As it was, it was only a last minute decision by one of his own countrymen at that. You see we can do nothing without outside payment."

"Oh, Jesu!" uttered the Dictator, rapidly making the sign of the cross upon his chest.

"Please don't do that!" cut in the decisive voice of the Interviewer, "That's considered very bad manners down here, very bad indeed!"

The Dictator stopped his squirming and sank back into the chair. His cigar had gone out, but he did not notice it. It rolled from the ashtray onto the floor where it lay, unnoticed.

"But to more pertinent matters, General, the purpose of your visit is to have Dr. Sidlich—ah, removed, is that correct?"

"Yes, that is right". The voice was weaker, somewhat less dominant.

"It will be expensive, quite expensive. Which, of course, you must realize. Will you be prepared to meet our fee, General?" asked the Interviewer.

The Dictator's voice was once again back in stride, "I can, I will. Sidlich *has* to be removed. The people love him too much, too much for him to continue to live. There will be a statue in his honor in every village—after he is gone. I will erect them. Yes, I will pay, I *have* to. What is the cost?"

The Interviewer smiled and slid open a desk drawer to remove a slim folder. As he opened it, the Dictator could see the Gothic "Sidlich, Fedor" printed on the front. The Interviewer read a moment and then turned to the Dictator.

"It wlil be quite expensive, General. The price will be five thousand souls".

"It will be payed. I will have to start a small revolution, but you will have the souls."

The Interviewer now took a small decanter and two glasses from another drawer in the desk and set them on the table.

"A cup of wine to seal the bargain, Gen-

(Continued on page 35)

on poetry's life

By Larry E. Phillips

BETWEEN the shallowly torn waves of time,
Stirred to undulations
By steadily upheaved seas,
Our daily graves were touched in the crouch of waves.

Struck, the ancient sparkling images broke,
And whirling within their multitudes a scroll,
Tumbled an inrolled sea ashore,
Knotted until it unfolded on land,
And drew flatly down against the sand.
It throbbed there beneath the split sun sprays,
And congealed a jewelled gall of infinite sides,
Till it was bleached and powdered to where the sea,
Touched and kept the immutable gem alive.

The sea rose up against the dry land
And rained on it, though mountain echos raged;
For what sea could hold its limits in
When the child of it lay crippled on the land,
When the White draped arms of earth
Were empty grasps of Venus without green rain.

The white fingers clutched the browning sphere,
And a hawk flew in a path of unbroken air,
Diffusing into the orb where green things crept;
But the hawk had diminished, dropping down
With the sun spread—Oh the light
Parched the thin cross-drawn layers of green;
And the white earth motionless stood dead
Around the notion of the tremulous sphere of green.

Water! Pray to the bird. Oh the withdrawal
Of green. Time! The white light hurts.
But the hawk lifted, vanished within the sun,
And the sphere shaking, raged a muffled rage
Calmed, shook again, then was still.
Its strands of yarn browned to rigidness,
Snapping back sharp hooks that clutched
The land again—a thistle held, clamped
The green within, held, saved, and endured!

The patient fruit lay silent upon the land,
In huddled rage against the encrustment of an age—
Oh how it held there by a hook of faith,
The rutting wind drying the white land
To barren wastes until all things cracked,
And broken from their rigidness, were done.

For the unbloomed fruit to stir within and split
Its jail and thrust its white and form its green,
The wet sun must weaken its bristled hull;
Yet the embryo turns in contracted walls,
Restless for words from the sea to free
The embodied truths of growth, eternal songs.

It listened. The ever silent voice was heard,
And the sea clapped and shoved against the land,
The gem flowering when the shore fell;
Green startled the earth, the surprise of life
Seducing the white land, the raining green jewels
Adorning the land through tentacles from the sea.

Larry is a graduate student in English, editor of Venture, and from Indianapolis, Indiana.

Solo Echo

By Alan Goddard

WHEN I felt the morning knock on the door to waken me I did not want to admit it. I had several selfish dreams I wished to hold. The knock came again, and I had to move. I kicked at the shrouding warmth and felt the cold on my feet immediately. I shivered. The knocking was insistent. The bird scolded me cockily safe in her cage. I opened the door. Swede stood there grinning blonde so that I could see almost all of his teeth at once, and not all of them were good. I said nothing and let him pass into the room. I always do. Sometimes I complain though, and say I hate to get up. Swede and the others have come to accept this and don't demand too much from me in the morning. I just move wearily and shave and wash. Sometimes I wish I were Oblomov. But I know that I will never be. I get up away from the deep warmth that only back and insides really feel. I swear that I am insane because this is so like insanity, this remorse at leaving the safe, unrepressed sleep world. I look in the mirror and curse those lingering dreams in my eyes and the grinning Swedish face.

"It's cold out," he said.

"I don't give a damn," I answered.

He shut up as I had hoped he would, and I felt like throwing up in the sink. Instead I brushed my teeth.

"Whattayagonnadotoday?"

I SPAT into the sink. "I'm gonna be sick and vomit all day," I said. He laughed thinking that I was being funny in my morning way, and I hated him. I classify all his kind into the general group of morons and idiots. I can't help it. I envy and admire them; I try to emulate them, but I can't help it. I hate them and think of them as morons and idiots.

Damn, damn, damn your stupid incomprehension, I said to myself. He watched me step into my pants; it was a cold step. Sometimes I think he is queer, but I don't know. He has never made a pass. I took a great deal of time brushing a shine back onto my shoes. I like doing it. My hands are busy and my mind pretends that I am doing something big. Only I was reminded of Shirley when I mixed the spit and polish. I used to stand on the streets—sometimes leaning against the store fronts—smoking and spitting. When I first asked Shirley for a date she had replied, "Okay, if I can carry a cuspidor." I started to laugh.

"What you laughin' at?"

"Nothing," I told Swede. He blew his nose into some toilet paper; he disgusted me. I wanted to smash in his unknowing face. Instead I thought about Shirley and sex. She had small breasts, very white skin and a mole on the left. There is a good feeling in my loins when I remember the two warm bodies meeting in cold air. Hell, I thought, its too early in the day to start this. I opened the drawer where I sometimes stash a bottle. I got it out, and held it up to the light. Vodka, clear and crisp, stinging. There wasn't very much and Swede looked greedy. His kind is the type that has only just discovered drinking and hates it, but they always have to try to act eager. Without a word I killed the bottle pouring it out in a fairly even split in two glasses, and I handed him one. I started to sing "Good morning to you, good morning to you; we're all in our places with sunshiney faces," etc. The boob liked it. There is such torment in me to live sometimes, and I have to blunt it and twist it inward; and the blunt stabbing hurts so damn much. I start out everyday this way, I think, and Swede and all the others come in. I would like to read all day out loud to someone who would hear all and find all the

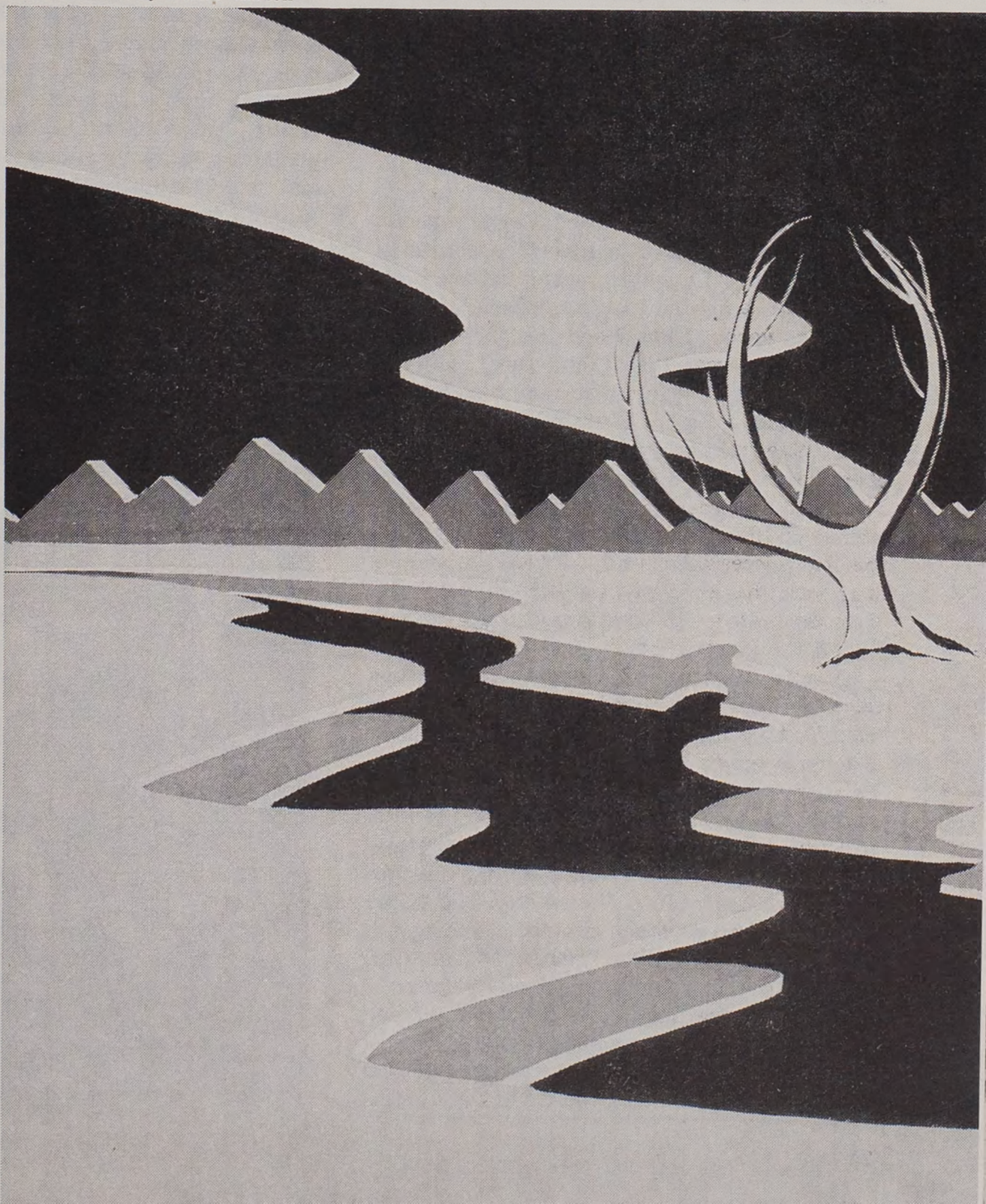
This story by Alan Goddard is of the same theme used by Alan in Venture's fall issue, but it is treated differently here. Alan comes from Butte.

sweetness that I find. When on this barren plane will I find it again? I look in people, men or women, and when I don't find it I feel sick all day right where the neck meets the back and in front under the Adam's apple. This is what I mean when I say blunted. Jim, who was my only friend, told me I had innocence. I can't believe it was innocence. Shirley, Julie and Jim and I were able to have this sort of thing at various stages of my life with them. I don't think it was innocence. I swallowed th vodka and asked Swede, "Do you think I am innocent?"

HE LAUGHED and said an obscene no. I nearly spat in his face.

I put my coat on with a sigh. Breakfast. If I were to close my eyes all day, the day would pass the same as yesterday. I could walk and talk and make perfect sense to all the idiots and morons. They would not see that I was passing the day with my eyes closed. I cannot do this of course. I see the day and feel the earth beneath me vibrate up into me, and I could shout with a joy. A joy of such wonder and such continual surprise. I feel almost Pollyanna-like. The sky

Illustration by Claire Larson



is my soul, I think; I know Jim is right. I am innocent, and the air I breathe is strength; so I can walk with pride. I rarely see or hear anything when I walk. It is only inside under the naked fists that shine on all the stupid faces that I feel dirty. I feel then the mud from the backyards of a thousand minds all better than mine, and all happy in the mud. I would sooner sleep in vomit, or walk barefoot to India. I would sooner cry in my sleep and need my bed to cover me and keep me. But I don't. Everyday in every way I blunt my rage and mingle with the morons and idiots.

Oh, I know the morons and idiots must be right. God made so many of them. Sometimes though I seek His reason in making me, and I am dumbfounded. I am so very much less than the least idiot. So I do silly, trembling foolish things too loud. I try to imitate them. I try not to think. I try only to be interested in the adolescent sex pangs about me, and worry where my next laughter will come from. Only when I worry about that laughter I cut in a little deeper and a little harder. Laughter means so much to me. I see laughter like sunlight. I feel it like good work. I know and feel the muscles in my chest, my throat and face. Only I never laugh this way when I am with Swede and all the others. I wish I could be an idiot. Everything would be so simple then. Even sex. With me sex is mysterious, and I tend to confuse it with religion. The substance of life, the power of it, the urge of it, the very screaming of it—I could stop and look into the eyes of Julie or Shirley, and they would know. How many times we had hoped for procreation.

"You're thinkin' about sex again," Swede said. I once told Swede to watch out for me. To help me fit in and be an idiot. When I looked across the table at that smile I hated myself for it, and him, and the world and all the food I was eating. I wanted him to leave or just disintegrate. Without leaving any trace. I was sure that even his ashes was disgust me. We walked to class in silence. I had so much protest in me that I could not face the sky. The snow trampled down by so many feet then glazed by warmth and freezing fascinated me. How many men, I wondered, had passed this way. Does every man? And if so, where and how? The everyman and his mate, the we of the others. Does she ever touch and reassure him the way I plead with my self's idol to touch and assure me?

THE DOORS flapped open, and I went in. The halls were so much darker than the winter morning. I wanted to look back into that grey outside and see the black pines against the sleeping snow. I did not. I went to class instead, to a world where Melville and Wyatt only half exist and rarely touch reality; and even the professors know it. I looked at my teacher. He was a man who was real to me. I liked him and enjoyed his classes. He was a shy man, I thought. Only I was not sure. Sometimes I felt that he was merely tired and the world had beaten him back to a place where he could do no harm —mould and work with the minds of the young. Only when I would talk to him and would try to share and grasp what he knew and could lead me into, did I think him shy. A little bashful that he had this thing and

Illustration by Teresa Drivdahl

me eager for it. And at these times I thought of him as a Walt Disney pollywog. Or a sperm. He took roll and the world was his monotonous lull. I searched for heat in my comrade, my colleagues at Eng. Lit. of the Seventeenth Cent. Finally I settled on Margot and Clint. They had warmth and life. They were intrigued by this world. They had each other. Her throat was white, and I ached to touch that special special softness of a young woman's throat. And always under her eyes there was a hint of the smile past and the one to come. Her lovely hair was soft and close upon her head, and her mouth was large—moist and red with half chewed lipstick. Looking at her I hated. Then I saw Clint and I lost my sense of hate. I could remember how rigid his lines had been before her, before they were two and still one. They were Clint and Margot. They were one in my mind. A happy one, and I was never capable of becoming their three and still one, unless suddenly we all plunged into insanity. Insanity was a happy thought. It always is. There in its inward sanctity all unreality is unreal; and not the unreality which hangs my reality on such a real peg of despair. Quietly Clint and Margot settled back into handholding, and my mind strayed back to English Literature of the Seventeenth Century.

The bell clamored me into life and clanged me to my feet and clashed the world against me, and I ran to my next classroom.

IMPASSE. Another hour, another day in my life. Very easily I could get up and face the outside world—cut the class. And be away. Still, one needs the holiness of an education to be a successful idiot. How could I be an idiot and not know about the field and stream of life in capsules from prehistoric water? Ellen came into the classroom and I smiled. She sat next to me. I was not sure of her, yet I hoped that I would be soon. Lately when I would think of her I considered the possibility of our children. I was pleased with the thought. We had talked on our dates, but I was not sure. She said a few words of greeting, and I said a few on the weather. Then she smiled and her brown eyes exploded with a mysterious communication to me that the world could never understand. I had to be cautious. I kept a confusion of security drive, sex urge and hope spinning in my brain. I felt my body shift; my eyes still on her. There is a plane where all things have a constant dimension and unknown trees grow. I find it in sleep and sometimes in Ellen's eyes.

I asked her for a date and she said yes; we parted and I went on the lonely day. Once I escaped. I went not caring about the foot wetting and coldness down to the river and saw how the ice had buckled from previous cold and now caught and prismed the single grey sun. . . . Some days when I stare at the sun the sky explodes with them. . . . I felt good, refreshed and urged. It is a simple thing really. Who ever has heard of a suicidal tree?

Ellen came downstairs. She looked nowhere but upon me. She heard nothing waiting for me to speak. I smiled and felt nearly sure. She made me feel nearly sure. We walked together and our steps matched. Her arm in mine. There was immunity to all the chaos of the idiots. And I tried, I held to her. I wanted her to feel my growing sureness. Still there always is doubt.

We danced. There was no one else on the floor. Her hair, dark and sweet rain smelling brushed my face; and her breasts were on my body, and our legs moved nearly together. When I would open my eyes all of a sudden I would be so aware of walls and the damn silly dim light. Over dinner I talked. She listened and spoke rarely. I was filled with the wonder of her trying to make sure too. I told her how when I was a younger boy I felt so many things. Once I had seen a movie with gruesome and wrenching scenes of the straffing, of the fleeing, crawling mass of Hong Kong and I went home marching to imaginary marital music. She understood.

I lie in bed now. There is moonlight in my room and quiet. I am sure. Soon I will ask her to marry me, and we will be one, Ellen and I. I am sure. We will have a house and children and work. It must be; it has to be.

The Infinite And the Finite

By Dave Walker

IN LITERATURE we can never actually define that which we are attempting to define, although we can give it a name. This is immediately bewildering to the novice and oftentimes horrifying to the expert who has realized, by the time he is called this, that we are all novices when it comes to portraying reality. For this is what literature attempts to do. Portray reality. Others may claim this mission, but literature is more quixotic; at least it is more vociferous in declaring "reality" a debatable issue, and therefore gets more attention. What is insidious, though, is that we seldom discover the existence of this, our most basic of ignorances, until we are so enmeshed in the web skirting it that we are unable to retreat —unless we blow out our brains; a remedy that is popular enough to encourage the more cautious (or the more wise) not to read at all.

Actually, we all smash head-first into the question whether we challenge it or not, get enmeshed purposely or not; although there is the possibility that the literary minds make the problem more difficult—and therefore more frustrating—than it really is. But the question: "What is reality?" once it is faced, so vexes the writer and the critic (and we can safely assume every reader is either writer or critic, or both) that libraries are filled with personal definitions of it.

Reality is sort-of like hair down the back of the neck. You know it is there, and it constantly makes its presence felt. You can change clothes if you like, but you can never pick it out hair by hair and feel confident that you have it all. There is still the awareness of its real or assumed presence, and it pricks assumptively as much as it does really. What is disturbing is that the assumptive pricking may be more actual than what we call the real.

If you've noticed; we are talking somewhat in circles; but that is what one almost has to do when dealing with reality. So, to prove our point, let's approach it first with two terms—feelers—that will adequately illustrate the illusiveness of our quarry and the difficulty of what Eliot's Prufrock calls a mission of "decision and revision". Let's start with the "infinite and the finite". Afterwards we will consider, somewhat synonymously, the terms "order and disorder", the "mystic and the orthodox", the "artist and the critic", the "classic and the neo-classic." It is the implications of these approaches to reality that interest us, for in them we may be able to understand the difficult role of literature.

IF WE were to make the dogmatic statement that one cannot read *Moby Dick* merely on the level of adventure, we would be opposing thought that finds its expression in the finite. The value of a work such as *Moby Dick* is that readers do find enough in the author's surface expression to interest them. But in literature we are interested in causing the reader to look beneath the surfaces. And if he looks beneath the surfaces in a book like *Moby Dick*, or of any true classic, he will find various levels of meaning. A mind that refuses to accept surface meanings will always try to overturn the upper surface and see what lies beneath. The truly searching mind usually discovers that there is no surface that will defy meaning. This is the paradox. It discovers that possibly every first impression is an illusion. It's like two mirrors facing each other that reflect each

other endlessly, except that the mind does not always immediately see the entire succession of images. It must often come to one image at a time, examine it, and go on to the next one. The paradox is that it assumes it will never come to an end. But once it has gone beyond the mere resignation of the paradox, it discovers that this image breaking (or symbol dissolving—since that is what images are—symbols of an immediate incomprehensible reality)—is the most exciting and meaningful adventure of all.

But what of the mind that does not find meaning in this world of image or symbol? To discuss this attitude let us label "optimistic" the mind that sees meaning and order, and "pessimistic" the mind that fails to see meaning and order, realizing that these are arbitrary and misleading since they imply a value judgment.

The true tragedian, for instance, such as Sophocles, is a writer who sees meaning and order in infinity. Sophocles is optimistic about a world where he sees the malignancy of a tragic flaw in character harming not merely those who are victims of such a character and his actions, but also boomeranging to hurt the person in whom the tragic flaw is inherent. The tragedy, as Sophocles sees it, is that the person has the flaw in the first place and is unable to ward off the inevitable boomerang of his own making. A character such as Oedipus, noble in all respects except for an occasional slip of sophrosyne (moderation, kindliness), must accept the consequences of his hubris (insubordination to order) even though he finally recognizes his flaw. The tragedy was that of having the flaw in the first place, a Nemesis or fate the consequences of which he was unaware, but which must inevitably destroy him nonetheless. The indication that Sophocles is an optimist is that in his tragedies he makes the protagonist aware and responsible for his acts; even though Sophocles recognizes the tragedy of a situation wherein a character must assume responsibility for acts of which he is not the entire blame, since the flaw that produced the acts was inherent.

EURIPIDES, on the other hand, is a pessimist. He may recognize this order that demands retribution for every act of hubris, but he cannot be reconciled to a world that implants the original tragic flaw. For him the world may have order, but in the words of a less pessimistic tragedian, Shakespeare, it is a "sound and fury signifying nothing". Euripides is a pessimist because in his tragedies he does not make the protagonist either responsible or aware of his flaw and its consequences. His attitude, probably the result of the Peloponnesian War, is found after most periods of upheaval; although Shakespeare in his later plays such as Troillus and Cressida, and even Plato in his Republic, finally reflect this pessimistic attitude toward infinity.

The optimist is not worried about tragic flaws because he finds in their infinite re-

Orpheus in the Shadows

By R. Schaffer and J. Monks

BENEATH imperfect light, shadows move
Silent as leaves against the breeze.
Down dim aisles of concrete we rush
In radiant despair thru night into night,
As leaves without song, water without warmth,
Breeze without soul.
Now, the singer! And as we plunge, Orpheus
Cries out to our ears, like a drowsy bird in the early dark.
It is then we hope, coldly;
Like the stars, equivocal and eternal—
Our souls are heated, as were our eyes
By that icy warmth, whole, unpossessed, the singer's self.
And the lute, our chalice, the bearer of our life,
Is elevated downward, to the leaves, our lips.

Robin Schaffer is a senior in English from Great Falls, Montana. Other work of Robin's appeared in last year's Venture. John Monk, married and a senior in Physical Science, comes from Anaconda.

flections, in the eternal boomeranging of act and consequence, an order that excites and interests him and makes him feel secure. The pessimist feels insecure because he feels that the power that implants the original tragic flaw is an arbitrary power. The pessimist cannot see why a character in whom a tragic flaw has been implanted must be responsible for his acts. He blames the order itself. He does not see the infinite reflections of act and consequence resolving themselves into a harmonious whole; an order where "everything comes out in the wash", an order that has meaning because everything in that order is equally responsible. The pessimist is stopped by one finite image at a time and clings to that image rather than try to see how the images reflect themselves endlessly. He seeks security in the finite range, whereas the optimist seeks security in the infinite.

Actually, we cannot judge between these two attitudes, but we recognize in literature a clash between them. This is the issue separating the mystic and the orthodox, the artist and the critic, the romantic and the classic, distinctions which we will proceed to discuss. Actually, it is a clash between the classic and the neo-classic, but the confusing term romanticism becomes separated from classicism only in the minds of the romantic, a separation we need not necessarily support. The issue is actually classic and neo-classic.

Instead of infinite and finite, order and disorder, optimist and pessimist, let us now call the opposite attitudes mystic and orthodox. The mystic feels that every finite is merely a symbol of the infinite. That is, the mystic sees the world as symbols, but he would always go beyond each symbol or image, each finite, until he sees the infinite reflection in the mirror. The mystic knows this is rarely possible; but once he has seen this infinity, he can relax in the finite, knowing there is an infinite meaning to life. The dogmatic orthodox, though, is pessimistic about man's ability to have the one vision of reflective meaning, so it worships the finite image or symbol literally. The mystic would say that in so doing the orthodox is believing one finite image rather than comprehending the infinite.

AGAIN, the difference—since they both deal in the finite image—is that the mystic assumes that the images he sees daily are only symbolical meanings of infinity. The mystic feels that the temporary vision is not abiding and worthy to be called real; but since he has had that one vision of infinity where all these images tie together into one meaningful world, he is content with the images, knowing they are only images or symbols; and also knowing he cannot define the infinite in finite terms. He doesn't try to —or if he does—he recognizes the great limitation of language, which is finite, to define infinity. But if he tries to define it, he too will deal in symbols—images that he hopes will reflect this infinity he has once seen and would like to recapture.

The orthodox, though, accepts the finite definition which is given of infinity not as an image, not as a symbol, but as a concrete definition of infinity that can be worshipped in the terms of words and structures. The dogmatically orthodox does not move from the finite words and structures into the infinite. It accepts the words and forms literally. The orthodox, usually, has never had a vision of the infinite meaning and interrelation of all things, but accepts the definition of another who has. He reveres the definitions or, as the mystic would agree with Plato, infinity twice removed.

Here we have not made the distinction—as we should—between the visionary orthodox and non-visional one. The visionary orthodox may have had a vision of the infinite meaning, but he also is pessimistic about his fellows ability to do the same. So he tells his fellow what he sees in the concretes or finites of words, hoping the fellow will—from these most rudimentary of all symbols—see the infinite world he has glimpsed. He would rather the fellow believe in the meaning and order as he defines it — as the second best thing — rather than flounder in a world without meaning. So he, too, will present symbols, words, images, structures for the fellow to cling to; but he hopes the fellow will move from these words, images, structures—which are only symbols of the infinite—into the infinite on his own.

Note that we have moved in discussing the infinite and finite from image-and-symbol to word-and-structure to form. There is a tendency, whether we are optimistic or pessimistic, to meet here. We will explain why

this is, later. But now let us substitute for the terms infinite and finite, order and disorder, for mystic and orthodox the terms artist and critic.

If the visionary artist has once seen an infinite form he will try to create a finite form that he feels reflects the infinite. He will write a poem, or sculpture a statue, or paint a picture or compose a tune. He may do this from a joyous sense of perception that he wants to share. This is probably the best reflection of infinity. Or he may do it out of a sense of duty or obligation to his fellows. This possibility is not as good a reflection because he will feel he has to deal in the terms of his fellow rather than in the terms of himself and the infinite. To the extent that he is compromised by the demands of the less perceptive who demand more concrete images which they can understand, he possibly loses some of the infinite, but he substitutes the finite. And most of us are thankful for this. An artist who grasps infinity in lunges must fill in the path after him if he wants company. If he does this though, he is a pessimist. If he is an optimist like Whitman he says: "Failing to fetch me at first keep encouraged, missing me one place search another, I stop somewhere waiting for you." But, of course, he doesn't stop at all. He moves on. Actually he is pessimistic about his ability to define infinity in finite terms, but he is optimistic about his reader's ability to parallel this movement on his own.

THIS, you can see, is where art snobbery would enter. We will be insulted by an artist in proportion to our own perception of infinity. But what of the artist? We have assumed all artists have a vision of the infinite. Of course, this is not necessarily so. Some are more perceptive than others. Therefore there is an important relationship between the artist and the critic, just as there is an important relationship between the infinite and the finite. Where the artist and the critic agree on infinity we have a balance. Do we have a classic where the greatest number of critics agree on the perception of the artist? Not necessarily. We will explain why later.

And what of the critic and his perceptions? We have assumed that all critics are also equally perceptive of infinity; and there is the implication here that the great classics will be recognized in an age when both artist and critic have great perception: or at least in an age that is agreeable about infinity. Actually, in the present age there is a great disharmony between the artist and the critic. Our age is in a state of disagreement about infinity. Our age is one that cannot decide between order and disorder.

As we have sketched it, there is a difference between the perception of the artist and the critic. It is one of degree. One perceives infinity directly, the other perceives infinity second-hand. The artist perceives infinity; the critic, who limits himself to the artist's perception, perceives only the artist's imitation of infinity. One presents a form or image of infinity, the other judges. Again, concerning the question of pessimism vs. optimism, which is more pessimistic about infinity and his fellow's ability to perceive it: the artist who will try to mirror infinity or the critic who merely judges the reflections of the artist? We almost are forced again to make a distinction between the visionary and non-visionary. Maybe the visionary critic is needed to interpret the artist who may not understand his own perceptions. Perhaps it takes the visionary critic to interpret infinity in the light of other artists' reflections

Your Sin Mankind

By Larry Gaughan

Taste with sour palate, man
All genesis of guilt
As you blaspheme yourself
With logic's eye.

You nail the body's will between
Two Edens, past and future,
And sentence mind with codes you find
As heir to bearded dreams.

Self-chained Prometheus:
Also you are
The hawk
Which eats your liver

of infinity. In this case, the critic may also create by combination. Or can we dogmatically reiterate that the critic just does not have a perception of the infinite? Actually the question is: what is more important, perception or judgment?

Concerning the question of orthodoxy: Doesn't an art become orthodox when it imitates the reactions of the non-visionary critic and not the reflections of the artist? And doesn't the artist become orthodox when he conforms to the judgment demands of the critic rather than rely on his immediate perceptions? Therefore possibly to the extent that an artist becomes a critic—one who judges perceptions of infinity—and not a creator—one who perceives infinity directly, he becomes orthodox.

Is there a difference between that which is orthodox and that which is a classic? Here, probably is the distinction. A classic is that which is a unique reflection of infinity; an orthodox work is that which is an imitation of a unique classic. In our terms of optimist and pessimist, a classic is optimistically conceived because its creator has gone directly to infinity. An orthodox work is pessimistically conceived because its creator-second-hand has gone to the finite—in this case the classical artist. The one seeks the order and meaning of infinity, the other is afraid or pessimistic about this order and meaning so it clings to the artist's imitation. The orthodox work becomes infinity twice-removed. Finally when imitations imitate imitations endlessly art becomes stultified. This form of art eventually creates an artificial world because it does not believe in a natural world of order and meaning. An art which then merely imitates this artificial world is orthodox. It comes dogmatic about the finite—or orthodox—and finds its imitations of the finite the only security against a disorderly and meaningless infinity. Instead of classics we have neo-classics.

BUT isn't a classic the first step toward the artificiality of a neo-classic world? Yes. But the thing that makes a classic a classic is not only that it is unique—an original perception of infinity, but that it more directly imitates an infinity that defies finite definition, an infinity about which there is disagreement. A classic is a classic in proportion to the number of meanings. *Moby Dick* is an example, the Bible another. They but can be read so many ways; so many meanings can be incorporated into them by the critics; so many levels of meaning can be attributed to the artist that they can appeal to a greater number of people. But what appeals is not unity of agreement about what the artist is saying about infinity, but agreement that the artist is saying enough about it to appeal to people of all ages who will disagree about infinity. This is what we meant when we said a classic is not that perception of infinity with which the greatest number of critics agree. The balance of artist and critic is not a pivotal point where most agree on the artist's perception of infinity, but actually, probably, where most agree he is portraying an infinity that defies finite definition. Agreement about an artist's perception of a particular infinity creates an orthodox popular work, popular for a particular time; disagreement about an artist's particular perception of an infinity that cannot be particularized, creates a classic, popular in all times. There seems to be the assumption here that popular works of an age cannot be classics. Actually many works popular in their day are now considered classics. But are they popular today? And are they classics because they "were" popular or because they are timeless? Some critic-approved classics may be considered such because they are unique reflections of an age and not of infinity. A classic is timeless—as is infinity. Perhaps many of our so-called classics are merely reflections of a time. Some are artist's perception of infinity — others are merely the critic's perception of the finite.

What we have slighted so far in our discussion is quality of perception. How can we judge one idea or perception of infinity above another? That is, how can we tell whether one artist is more successful than another at portraying infinity in the finite terms of word, line, tone. We have ignored those qualities of a classic that may not imply mere disagreement; those qualities that imply agreement but do not mean mere popularity; qualities such as moderation, cleanness of line, clearness of tone—perceptions of infinity that may be more valid than other perceptions that imply chaos, passion, the grotesque.

We once more return to the optimist and the pessimist. The one—the optimist—sees

infinity not only as infinite and changing, but orderly and meaningful. He will see form and moderation, cleanness of line and tone, order, act and consequence with meaning. He will be objectively subjective. In his objectivity and serenity he will demand subjectivity of perception. The other, the pessimist, will see infinity as chaos. He will see disharmony, discord, the grotesque, act and consequence without meaning. He will be subjectively objective. In his subjectivity and instability he will demand objectivity of perception. The two will tend to cross at form: the optimist because he sees form in infinity, the pessimist because he fails to see form and will feel he has to create form of his own. This is what we meant when we said the optimist and pessimist often meet at form. But doing so implies doubt by both. The optimist, who sees form in the infinite, will still feel that no finite form actually can capture the infinite. The pessimist, who does not see form, will feel that his created form is only a temporary refuge from chaos. How can we judge whether these forms—created because of, or in spite, of an infinity viewed or believed to be harmonious or discordant —are valid reflections of reality? Which is actually portraying the real world?

WE ARE back where we started, trying to define reality. We cannot judge between these two attitudes. What is apparent is the frustration of trying to define the infinite in finite terms. What this means is that we cannot actually define categorically. Infinity —orderly or chaotic—is grasped only by glimpses. Reality is too utterly complex to find definition in such easy and arbitrary terms as pessimist and optimist, orthodox and mystic, critic and artist, neo-classic and classic. The two mix infinitely. For instance, in the distinctions of optimist and pessimist we are ignoring the variable of a Euripides who may appear pessimistic merely because he is actually the supreme optimist, and like Mathew Arnold or Tennyson cries out for proof of an order and meaning he knows cannot exist. Like a forgotten name he cannot remember, the fact that he knows there is a name he has forgotten implies its existence. Or in the distinction of orthodox and mystic we are ignoring the variable of a St. Augustine who says "If you truly love God, you can do anything," a definition which, Whitmanesque, destroys distinctions of any kind and leaves the non-mystic floundering. Or in the distinction of artist and critic we are ignoring the claim of a Mathew Arnold who claims the artist creates out of the ideological ferment created by the critic. In other words, which came first, the artist or the critic?

You see, it is too complex. Possibly the true man of knowledge is in a constant state of maladjustment to reality, the premise with which we started. Once we accept any truth and accept it as final, we must forfeit the title "seeker after truth." This again is the paradox. The mind that demands a definition has started the process of death. When a mind accepts such limitations it has quit living. However, this sort of an assertion is also possibly invalid. To assert that something is true is no more valid than to assert that it is not. The important thing is that the questing mind continually remains open to reality. This does not mean it does not judge. We can probably say that an artist or critic is a person who believes an idea long enough to write about it.

Except that we must begin somewhere. That is why we start with the word, the most rudimentary symbol of infinity. It is with words that we begin to approach infinity, and it is with words that we tend to stultify and make artificial. The first word was the first step toward formalization, and again, the first approach to an infinity that can be communicated. So this is what literature and education does. It seeks communication and implies its necessity.

Whether it is successful is for all of us to judge. Here the infinite and the finite, the mystic and the orthodox, the artist and the critic, the classicist and the neo-classicist disagree.

The Butterfly and the Bee

(Continued from page 4)

Sunday?" She paused. "That's why I played, hon."

"Of course, you did," he spoke bitterly. "Not for the quiet adulation." He couldn't help it. His sneering voice hit into the familiar groove. "Not for the adoration you knew would be in the boy's eyes. It was for us."

She didn't reply. He turned back to the window, his head averted. She had taken her hand away. Finally, he groped for it. It lay numb in his own at first, then it replied with pressure.

"Yes, it was the bells," he admitted. "And Roaning."

She seemed further from him each year that they spent here. He could not find the pleasure she found in this little western town. But then, he reminded himself, he never found in anything the pleasure Mary found. He pounded the arm-rest with his fist, gently.

"We should have stayed in Chicago," he exclaimed. "The heat wouldn't have been bad. And it was a good city for us."

"But it's so lovely here!" she cried. "The smells, Bill. And the people so much more relaxed. You can feel it. And you can hear it, too. The air is clearer. And that marvelous night scent of rain down the canyon! That's what I want. To walk out of the lobby at midnight just after a canyon rain; the wind still full of moisture and the sidewalk heady as ozone. But wait and see." She was growing more excited. "We'll be there in a few minutes. You'll relax as soon as we get off the train."

He mused and she drifted into anticipation. When the train started slowing down, he tensed. He dreaded the commotion of departure. When they rocked with the final jerk and the sounds of shuffling feet ended, he touched her arm. She rose, took down her violin and waited ahead of him. He lifted down the accordian and the small suitcase, put his arm under her elbow and nudged her forward. The unwilling train made one final lurch. He grabbed her waist, holding her—but not before her hand, in its flight for a hold, had hit the boy in the face.

"Oh, I'm so sorry," she cried, turning in his arms and fanning the air above the boy's head. "I'm so sorry."

"That's all right," the boy answered.

The young mother realized then and jumped up. "Can I help you?" she asked.

You could tell, then, she felt she shouldn't have. She covered.

"The violin, I mean. It must be heavy for you. Let Tommy carry it to the platform."

"Thank you. We'll manage," Mary smiled, her eyes only a fraction off-direction.

Bill pushed her forward again, gently. She laughed in his ear. "How foolish of me, Bill. They'll think we're amateurs."

The conductor took her at the step off, then helped him down the final step. They waited while the train pulled out. As soon as the crowd dispersed they found their way into the quiet train station.

"Bill, let's start here," she said.

"No!"

He had expected it.

"But why, Bill? It would be like homecoming. I'm tired of acting normal. I want to get this fur off me; and your overcoat must be stiffling. We can use the rest-rooms. Please. We can work our way to the hotel. We needn't play. Give the cabman our bags, Bill."

HE COULDN'T refuse her. Not in Roaning. She was vibrant. Her hand was quivering with excitement. He felt mute beside her.

He guided her into the ladies rest room. Then he took his suitcase and went into the men's room. He removed his overcoat and lay it beside the suitcase. He opened the case and took the dark glasses from it and drew the worn tweed jacket forth, putting the overcoat in its place. Loosening his tie, he drew an older collapsible cane from the bag and replaced it with the finer one. Snapping the case shut, he limped back into the lobby.

She was waiting. He hated her looking like that; like an owl; the dark glasses that were unnecessary, detracting from the fine look of her small face and still-lovely hair. He was glad the small station was deserted except for the man behind the cage who was busy. He removed his smoked glasses, then

walked out and gave the bags to a taxi man, and returned for her. From his overcoat he drew two tin cups, handing her one. She was trying to arrange her hair. He reached forward to help her, wondering as he did a dozen times daily how she really felt in that black world of hers when his hands weren't there to close the void.

Mary felt his large hands on her hair, sweeping it into a tighter mold, caressing it slightly. When they started out she felt she had to push assurance back into his bleating hand. 'Bill would never understand,' she thought. 'That Calvinist mother filling his head with illusions.' For his sake she hated bells, but actually she didn't. She loved to hear them like this on Sunday morning. It was her time of year: Spring with marshmellow air.

To her these smells and sounds around her were almost as real as the shoulders that brushed her, awkwardly apologetic. The embarrassed half-utterances that occasionally accompanied the coins were only as meaningful as the clank of the coin on metal or the pigeon flutterings or the counterpoint of automobile horns. They were all part of the rhythm for her, and she couldn't separate one from the other and call one meaningful and the other merely incidental—or even discordant. The whine of the siren, the scream of tires, the bludgeting of a cement drill were unpleasant only if she kept too close to them so that they drowned out the other sounds. It was the same with smells and sensations. The pavement was hard, of course, but then the park grass was soft. Bill was forever drawing distinctions, chopping off here and lopping off there, avoiding this and hurrying to that. Probing. She could never make him stop completely. Not completely. He always had to see beyond her pleasures and weigh them. She often wished, almost, that he, too, were really blind.

"Can't you feel the difference?" she asked.

When he didn't respond, she said: "Bill, hon, don't be such a bee," realizing as she said it that she shouldn't have brought the subject up again. She felt him freeze and was immediately sorry.

Just as suddenly, she couldn't be bothered. Let him sulk. Roaning was too good to be drowned out by words. She withdrew her arm and felt her way alone. She didn't

want to reach the hotel too soon. The sun flashed from between the piles of stone she could only sense and drove into her body, filling her with vitality. She was gay again.

"Let's don't quarrel, Bill. It's too good today."

A coin clanked into the cup and she smiled at the form that passed. Bill—as she expected—shrank a little. The first day was always the worst for him.

They finally reached the hotel. They knew every curb and raised spot in the town. When she felt the smooth sidewalk tile under her feet, she handed Bill the cup. He poured the coins into his pocket and then put the cups there, too. They moved into the lobby.

"Bill and Mary!"

IT WAS Carl. She was glad again for Bill's sake. Carl also had no illusions. It was Carl who made it possible for them to stay at this hotel. She remembered when they first approached him. The hotel was the finest in the small city, but Carl seemed only slightly surprised when they walked off the street and asked for a room. She later realized that he prided himself on his sophistication and that — by choosing his hotel — they afforded him an ideal excuse to display it.

"How's business?" he said. "Filling the coffers? But tell me about the mid-west, Mary." He knew her fondness for Roaning.

"Carl," she laughed. "The middlewesterners are the most generous, tight-fisted Puritans you ever met. You can just see their minds calculating the rewards for every dime they drop in the cup. They can't turn you down, I think, because fear seems to be their totum-pole." She paused, thinking of Bill's reaction, then continued. "They believe they're being generous and warm-hearted, but actually most of them are afraid not to contribute. Bill and I are one of their superstitutions, their fatal weathervanes. I don't know what they would do, Carl, if they had to give up their hope of eternal damnation."

Carl laughed. He said: "You know, I should take up your racket. After a stint in the cities, you get the best hotels in the towns; good food, a free life. And I don't think you two actually even need the money. You just don't want to be pinned down. But then, I guess you give the suckers something in return for their shillings—a feeling of self-rightousness if nothing else."

Again for Bill's sake, she said: "I shouldn't talk this way, though, Carl. It's probably like Bill says about church goers. You can't call them hypocrites really because of the after-Saturday purging. At least they're admitting their inadequacy. It's the feeling of inadequacy I can't understand. The way they insist on hugging Christian's back-pack."

She sensed Bill's growing discomfort. He was used to her talk but now others were milling near them, probably watching and examining. At these times she didn't regret the dark years at all. The light years, befor the illness, seemed garish in comparison to this comforting isolation from inadvertent hypocrisy. At least theirs was premeditated.

"Sam will take you up," Carl said. "He's new here. Be talking to you."

The bellhop was silent on the elevator. Bill ventured a comment about the approaching rain, but the man only grunted. She felt his derision. 'One of the knowing,' she thought, 'On the Inside; another without illusion, only a different breed.'

WHEN they reached the door and they stood there waiting she felt that something was wrong. She knew the bellhop was still standing before them. Bill was also motionless. She reached out and her hand brushed the outstretched hand of the bellhop. His silence was demanding a tip and it refused to acknowledge their dark glasses. And of course Bill couldn't respond to the outstretched palm.

"What's the matter? Why doesn't he give us the key?" she asked innocently.

"I thought he was looking for it," Bill lied. "Would you mind opening the door for us, Son?" he asked then.

"Here it is," the man said curtly. She felt Bill lurch beside her and the snorting laugh that followed. She knew Bill had fallen for the trick. Too late, he had pulled back, letting the key drop to the floor.

"Oh, I'm sorry," the bellhop said guilessly, "I thought you had it."

Inside, she acted as though she had been unaware of the mishap.

"We'll get that rain tonight, Bill," she said airily, "But first, dinner; then I'll play for

you, and after it rains we'll go out. All right?"

Bill leaned back into the bed, ignoring her. He wished he were back behind the old partition repairing the broken furniture and toys. It was good taking the inadequate material and re-shaping a nearly new piece, putting bent goods into shape again. Lonely, but good.

He watched Mary weaving cautiously from one piece of furniture to another, her hands lightly touching the surfaces as she felt the room. She was humming to herself. She looked as assured as she did that evening she came up to him, arms outstretched, and demanded gaily:

"Bill, come go 'abegging' with me."

It was like her.

"You're the one who's blind," she had said. "I'll show you light if only you'll forget those silly ideas about duty and purpose."

AND HE couldn't refuse her. He had surrendered, convincing himself he married her because she needed him. He was so jealous for that innocence that he couldn't help probing and holding it. That was rationalization, of course. He couldn't do without her.

The dream he'd had on the train returned. It was as though Mary actually looked at life through a lattice, he thought, and she couldn't see there was a blind spot—a black patch—covering several of the holes, distorting the whole picture. She insisted she saw everything more clearly than he. She lived in a world of hyper-reality, laughing in spite of the distortion the black patch made of her world, insisting that the view she saw was more clear than his visual one. She would say he was inventing the lattice.

He watched her now, humming still as she unpacked.

"Mary, I don't want to go out to eat."

She turned to him.

"All right." She paused.

"But what about after the after-rain, Bill?"

"Later."

They showered and she played the violin. He lay with his eyes closed. As he listened, the rebellion died in him. She moved up and down the room and finally settled at the foot of the bed. Later, he reached up and took the instrument from her hands, pulling her in giggling struggle down beside him. The violin thumped off the bed to the floor.

She tried to nudge him in the ribs with her bow, but he rolled over her, pinning her to the bed with his neck and shoulders, and drew the bow from her hand. She kissed his neck and snuggled against him. He felt complete.

"Bill, it's begun."

He awoke. She was dressed already. He got up, knowing it was useless to protest. The air, coming in the window, was like adrenelin for her.

They entered the back elevator so they could exit at the rear entrance. He was still groggy from sleep, but he experienced that strange sensation one has that what is happening has happened before and what is about to happen is inevitable. He was apprehensive. When the elevator stopped at the bottom of the shaft and the doors opened, he was not surprised to see the clot of people grouped around the blanketed form in the hallway.

MARY felt the tension, too, but she let him rush her past and out onto the street.

"Someone must have fainted," he said. "You stay here under the arcade by this policeman. I'll be back."

Inside he touched the nearest bystander on the shoulder. He could see the shape of the form under the blanket. A man most likely. The people gaping there were talking excitedly in low murmurs.

"Knifing," his informant said, again eyeing the twisted shape and then Bill, a flush of excitement in his face and eyes. "Found him in the alley. It's those young hoodlums that prowl this area. Nothing you can do about them, though. Too many of them since the new factories opened. The old kick. No parents around. Bad seeds, I say. No use trying to change them. Beyond repair when they go this far."

Bill went out. The policeman was still motionless, waiting for the ambulance. Mary was at the curb exultantly breathing in the swift air that pushed down the street from the canyon. She turned toward him, joyful wind-tears forming.

She didn't want to know. When she felt the pressure of his hand, she turned and put her arm around his waist.

"Isn't it wonderful, Bill! Oh, be as happy as I am now! Please, for me."

He pulled her closer and they edged down the sidewalk with the wind. He looked back at the policeman, facing up the street—watching. Pine scent from the mountain was mixed in the wind, and the dust from the sidewalk made them heady. He turned back and held her closer. She was fullblown. He pushed the greying hair from her forehead and kissed her eyelids.

New Shoes

(Continued from page 9)

house several times but there was no one in sight. Finishing the cleanup, he loafed around the barn uneasily and played with Stub, who liked to chase sticks but wouldn't even perk up his ears if you threw a stone for him to chase. Tommy wanted to receive a summons to the house and he was making an effort to conceal his anxiety. It didn't seem right, somehow, to expect to receive new shoes. If they were really there, he would be called.

Tommy had just thrown a stick for Old Stub to chase when the screen door slammed and Harold and Claude, Tommy's two older brothers, came out of the house into the yard. Harold looked around and saw Stub dart out from behind the barn, retrieve a stick, and trot back with it.

"Hey, poop-squeak, you heard me drive up. Whataya hidin' out there for? Ain'tcha goina come down and try on your shoes and see if they fit . . . they oughta fit, though, because I helped pick them out." Harold was the eldest brother and he made the decisions on the farm. They had been to town to bargain for an old Hart Parr tractor at an auction sale, but it had gone at too high a price.

Tommy vaulted over the corral fence and set a fast walking pace to the house. He was happy but he couldn't help resenting Harold's foreknowledge about his shoes. He didn't understand how anyone could speak with familiarity about so precious an item.

"I bet you haven't even seen them," he said, as he hurried past Harold and Claude.

"Listen to this! You wanna know what color they are, wise guy . . . they're brown. And take them eggs in you left by the gate."

TOMMY picked up the can of eggs and ran through the yard to the house. Harold's words burned in his ears. Why did he have to spoil everything?

"Is that you Thomas? Come into the living room. I want you to try on your shoes," his mother said, softly. She had spread a lot of old newspapers on the floor so that Tommy could try his shoes and walk in them.

Tommy's eyes fell upon the white shoe box the instant he entered the living room. Setting the eggs on the table, he removed the lid from the box and lifted one of the shoes out from under the tissue paper. The rivets were shiny and the leather soft. He held it close to his face and ran his hand over it. He liked the smell of new leather.

"Well try it on, silly," Geraldine said. Apparently she had forgotten how angry she had been.

Tommy kicked off his old shoes and, removing the bandage from his injured toe, squeezed into his new one. A little jolt of fear ran through him. They felt awfully tight.

"Stand up and see how they feel with your weight on them," his mother commanded.

Tommy rose and the shoes hurt his feet. He knew that they were too small and that his mother would never let him keep them. He wanted to say that maybe they would be all right after he broke them in, but he had a lump in his throat and couldn't say a word. Edna felt both shoes, carefully, and shook her head. She looked up at Tommy, but he was unable to meet her eyes.

"Take them off, dear," she said slowly, "we will have to send them back, but I will try again the next time I go to town." She had been afraid of the size when she bought the shoes but they were the only sturdy ones that she had been able to find on sale. She had to take a chance. Tommy knew that it would be spring before she went to town again.

A tear trickled down Tommy's cheek as he pulled the new shoes off and wedged into his old ones. The tears nearly blinded him as he stumbled out of the house. He couldn't stop them. A single thought pressed his confused brain; why hadn't she taken him to town instead of Claude? He went up on the hillside, beyond the pig pen, and lay down and cried very hard. Old Stub nudged his elbow with his nose and Tommy didn't push him away. He remained on the ground until his stomach ceased vibrating and the sobbing stopped, then he dragged himself up, wiped the tears away on the sleeve of his polo shirt, and walked toward the barn where Old Star stood saddled and waiting. Claude had saddled him for Tommy and led him out of the barn and tied him to a corral pole. Tommy gave the cinch a tug and climbed into the saddle, but getting mounted was greater effort than it had ever been. Star started up the canyon mechanically; the reins hung loose and he could tell by the way Tommy slumped in the saddle that he would have an easy trip. There were no thoughts in Tommy's mind of driverless stage coaches to catch, and desperadoes to punish tonight.

The Interview

(Continued from page 18)

eral?" the Interviewer asked, and then continuing rather slyly, "but perhaps you would prefer a bit of bread with it also."

The Dictator reddened and said nothing. He did not touch the proffered glass.

"What a pity Dr. Sidlich has to cease being so soon. From his file I see that he was destined to do very wonderful things. He would have quite left his mark on your world. But then, that has happened to so many we have dealt with, I remember . . . ."

The Dictator stiffened into instant rigidity; only his eyes betrayed his life by opening and closing very rapidly.

"Did you say—did I hear you say that—that—you can tell what a man will do in his life?" breathed the Dictator.

"But of course", answered the Interviewer, "it is a necessary part of our business. How else would we compute payment price? We have a file for every man who will perform any sort of outstanding action or rise to great heights during his lifetime."

"Could I possibly, possibly have a look at *my* file—only for a moment?" the pleading voice of the Dictator begged.

The smile of the Interviewer at last turned to a gentle laugh as he said, "Your file? Your file, General? My good sir, you have no file!"

her love was my expression

By Larry E. Phillips

THIS heap of bones, collapsed rag with eyes,
Was left by love's companionship,
Piled on coral reefs beneath the sea,
High castled cliffs of empty shells.

My flesh cannot return into a shell
It left for such a gentle smile;
That curving flame has charred my eyes
And invaded the shell, closing my world from me.

What life could stay within my centered ribs,
When I'm between a smile and shell?
Strewn and shrunk by the salt of the sea,
What shore would I be splashed upon to dry?

My bones bleaching! My flesh dried!
It was love's hope that layered these bones,
And spans of hope never touch to love,
For love is drawn and bridged alone by love.

I yet could strain to raise this flesh,
Though clothed about my bones without a shell,
And weep my eyes still burning in your smile,
Till I've forgotten what love you were.

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